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T. S. Denison's Royalty Plays

*The
City Feller*

by
Lillian Mortimer

*T. S. Denison & Company
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T. S. Denison & Company, Publishers

623 S. Wabash Ave.

CHICAGO

THE CITY FELLER



THE CITY FELLER

A Three-Act Comedy
of Rural Life

BY

LILLIAN MORTIMER

AUTHOR OF

"Little Miss Jack," "The Road to the City," etc.



CHICAGO
T. S. DENISON & COMPANY
PUBLISHERS

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1922

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THE CITY FELLER

FOR FIVE MEN AND FIVE WOMEN

THE CHARACTERS.

(*In the Order of Their Appearance.*)

JIM SIMPSON.....	<i>A Farmer</i>
MARTHY SIMPSON.....	<i>Jim's Wife</i>
LISSIE BROWN.....	<i>An Orphan</i>
GRANDPA SIMPSON.....	<i>Old But Ambitious</i>
AUNTIE PURVIS.....	<i>Sallie's Mother</i>
LEMUEL HECKER.....	<i>A Small-Town Slicker</i>
PHIL GRANGER.....	<i>The City Feller</i>
SALLY HECKER.....	<i>Lemuel's Widowed Mother</i>
JEFF BIGGS.....	<i>The Town Marshal</i>
ORRIN RUDDY.....	<i>The Village Postmaster</i>

PLACE—*Any American Village.*

TIME—*The Present.*

TIME OF PLAYING—*About two hours.*

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES.

ACT I. *The back door yard of the Simpsons' home. An afternoon in the month of August.*

ACT II. *Their settin' room. After supper, just a year later.*

ACT III. *Same as ACT II, the next morning.*

COSTUMES AND CHARACTERISTICS.

JIM SIMPSON—Aged 38. Large and heavy-set; a slow, easy-going farmer. Calico shirt with soft collar, sleeves rolled to the elbows, rough breeches with suspenders, boots, large straw hat, for Act I. Same style costume, but with different garments, for Acts II and III, as a year has passed.

MARTHY SIMPSON—Aged 30. A tall, gaunt, hard-working country woman, very domineering and narrow-minded. Dark calico dress with sleeves rolled up, straw hat, heavy shoes, for Act I. Light calico dress with sleeves rolled up, and large gingham apron, for Acts II and III.

LISSIE BROWN—Aged 16. Very sweet and lovable, but with the spirit and courage to speak up when necessary. She is devoted to Grandpa Simpson. Blue calico dress, low-heeled black slippers with straps, white cotton hose, big kitchen apron tied under her arms, hair in braid and tied with ribbon, for Act I; removes apron and puts on broad-brimmed straw hat when she goes to ride with Phil; takes off hat for last entrance in Act I. Bright colored gingham dress, white hose, black slippers, funny little hat trimmed with flowers, that looks as if she had trimmed it herself, for Act II. Same for Act III, until she changes to gown for marriage; then a simple white organdy with blue ribbon sash.

GRANDPA SIMPSON—Aged 65. A lovable old fellow, “bossed” by his daughter-in-law, Marty, and secretly in love with Auntie Purvis. Meek and gentle, but with a great sense of humor. He is smooth shaven, and his hair is white and rather long. Worn and faded trousers, soft shirt, string tie, black alpaca coat, straw hat, low black shoes and white hose, for

Act I. Same for Act II until he changes for wedding; then an old black Prince Albert or frock coat, light gray trousers and silk hat. Costume similar to that of Act I, for Act III.

AUNTIE PURVIS—Aged 60. A sweet little old lady, completely under the domination of her daughter, Sally. She longs for a little home of her own where Grandpa and she may end their days in peace. Old-fashioned, full-skirted, tight-waisted dress of dark calico, white collar with brooch, white hose and low shoes, for Act I. Same for Act II until she enters after her marriage to Grandpa, when she wears an old-fashioned, full-skirted, silk or cashmere gown of lavender or gray, with little bonnet to match, white lace collar and lace shawl. Costume similar to that of Act I, for Act III.

LEMUEL HECKER—Aged 20. A tall, raw-boned country boy, very conceited, important and know-it-all; an overgrown baby, spoiled by his mother. Jean overalls, loud shirt, unpolished boots, and large straw hat, for Act I. Loud, tight-fitting “store suit,” high stiff collar that is obviously uncomfortable, loud tie, gaudy socks, new shoes and straw hat, for Act II. Same as Act II except for change of tie and socks, for Act III, but does not wear coat until his second entrance.

PHIL GRANGER—Aged 24. A breezy, likeable chap, but with an air of mystery. The audience must not be sure, until he returns in the last act, whether he is honest or defrauding Grandpa. Palm beach suit, silk shirt, panama hat, low white shoes and white silk socks, for Act I. Neat business suit with low tan shoes, silk socks and straw hat, for Act II. White

flannel trousers and blue sack coat, silk shirt, low white shoes and silk socks, for Act III.

SALLY HECKER—Aged 38. A large, fleshy woman with a giddy, girlish manner. She is very coquettish and coy, a great talker and gossip. A large-figured, bright-colored summer dress, large floppy hat, low shoes and light hose, for Act I. Light-colored wrapper or old-fashioned house dress, with bow of bright ribbon at neck, large apron, white hose, large house slippers, for Act II. Same, with hair in curlers, for Act III, until she changes dress for wedding. Then light, girlish dress with bright ribbon sash around waist, tied in large bow at back, bright ribbon bow at neck, hair curled and puffed very elaborately, ribbon tied around head with large bow at the side, white hose, low shoes, many bracelets, cheap rings, beads, etc. All her dresses should be planned to accentuate her large size.

JEFF BRIGGS—Aged 70. Tall and sharp-featured, very excitable. Has red hair and short goatee. Large felt hat, rough suit, dark flannel shirt, string tie, large boots, constable's badge. Typical town marshal. Maybe somewhat over-done for comedy effect.

ORRIN RUDDY—Aged 70. A little old man, very eccentric and quite deaf. He is courting Sally, and carries himself with a jaunty and sometimes quite giddy air. Speaks in jerky sentences. Chews constantly (licorice is recommended, as it is not offensive). Store suit that is too large, paper collar, flashy ready-made four-in-hand tie that hooks on, old felt hat and cowhide boots.

PERSONAL PROPERTIES.

JIM—Buggy whip; pipe; tobacco in pouch.

MARTHY—Covered basket; laprobe; veil to tie hat on; dishes; tea-towel; cover for table; lighted lamp; lighted candle.

LISSIE—Laprobe; water pail and dipper; a small bundle done up in newspaper, supposed to contain all her clothes.

GRANDPA—Stamped, addressed and sealed letter; spectacles; candle and matches for Act II.

LEMUEL—Shotgun.

PHIL—Auto horn.

SALLY—Kid curlers for hair.

JEFF—Large constable badge.

ORRIN—Large envelope, addressed, stamped and sealed, with check inside.

SUGGESTIONS ON STAGING.

The stage settings for "The City Feller," as given in the diagrams and descriptions of scenes, are those used for the professional production of this play. In most instances it will be found practicable to reproduce the settings closely with the stock scenery and properties that are part of the equipment of the average theatre. But the settings may be simplified, if necessary, without harming the action of the play.

The set house used in Act I may be placed at the extreme left of the stage so that only the front and right side of the house are required, the wing in front of the house masking the left corner and side. Or if it is impossible to obtain or make scenery for a set house, it may be replaced by a low platform up ex-

treme left, set to represent a porch, the wing masking the place where the house is supposed to be. A railing and a vine trellis will add to the reality of such a porch. Entrances and exits to and from the house would be made across the platform, into the left wings.

If it is difficult to set the fence with angles as indicated, it may be set in a straight line from the right side of the house to a wing down right. Should your theatre have no property fence, make one of laths and scantlings, braced from the back, and white-washed. If the gate makes it top-heavy, omit the gate and just leave an opening, down right.

For Acts II and III, if you have no rough or kitchen interior, use the reverse side of a parlor set, with pictures, a calendar, a map, etc., on the walls. Do not use a kerosene oil lamp. A lamp fitted up with a candle is far safer.

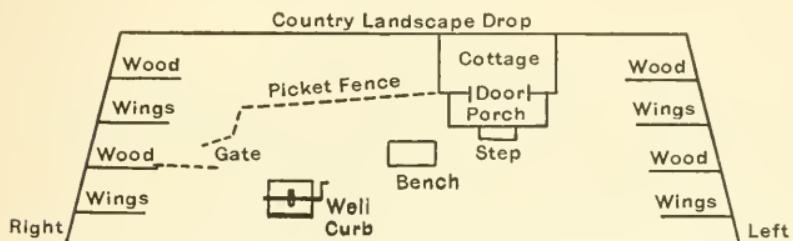
The use of the short flight of steps leading to the door up left in the interior set is not essential, but will add greatly to the dramatic effect of the action.

The incidental music called for includes "Old Fashioned Rose" (price 30 cents), and "Old-Time Wedding Day" (price 35 cents), both of which can be had from the publishers of this play.

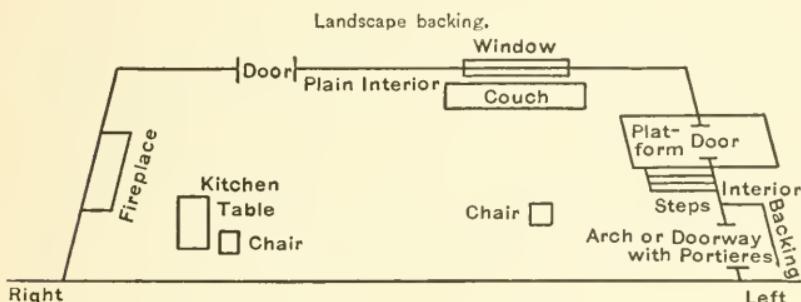
The lighting and music cues should be followed as given if possible, but they can be omitted.

SCENE PLOT.

ACT I.

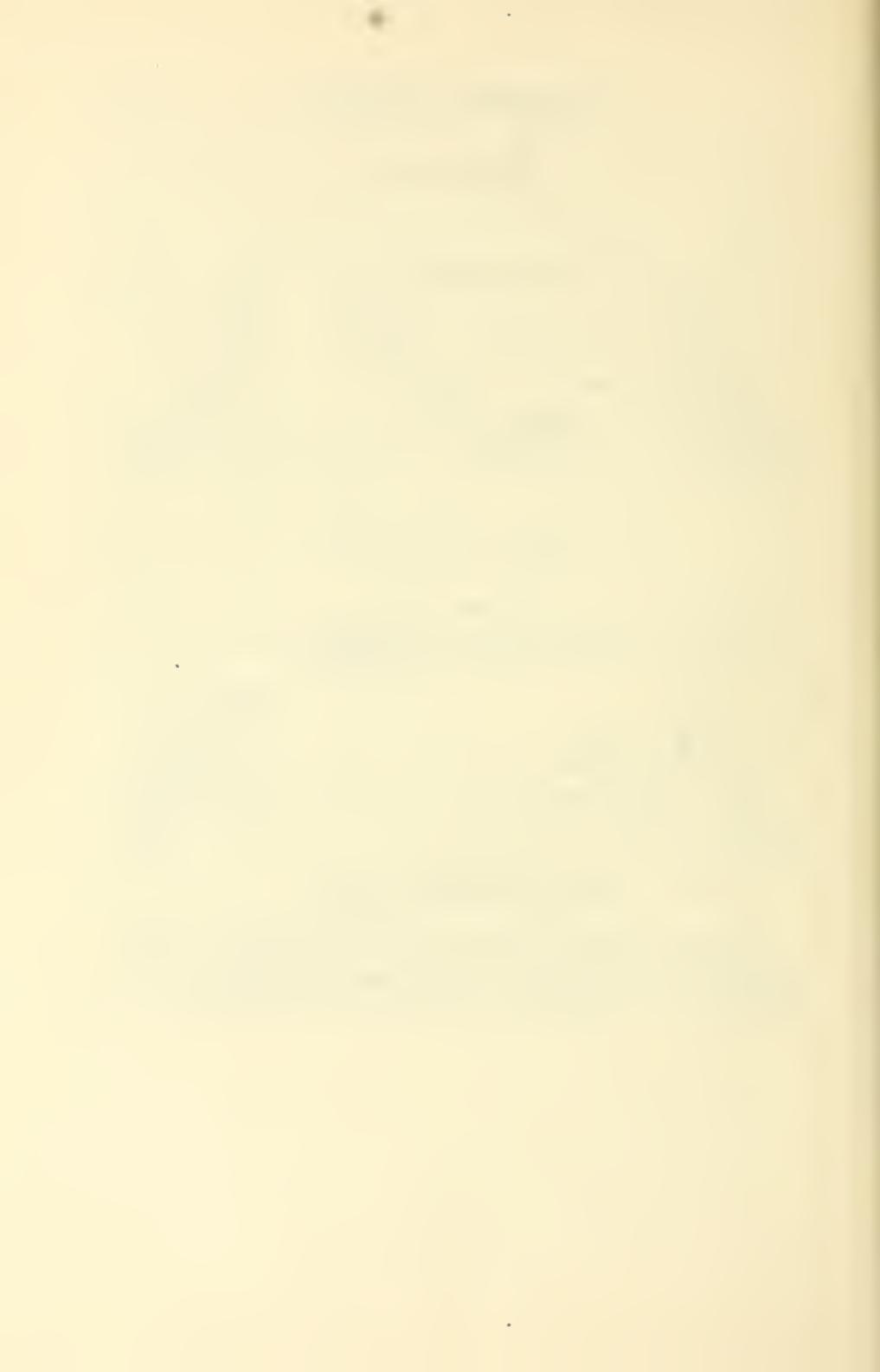


ACTS II AND III.



STAGE DIRECTIONS.

Up stage means away from the footlights; *down stage*, near footlights. In the use of *right* and *left*, the actor is supposed to be facing the audience.



THE CITY FELLER

THE FIRST ACT.

SCENE: *The door yard of the Simpsons' home, on an afternoon in the month of August. Across the back is a country landscape drop or cyclorama. A vine-covered porch, with a single step, leads to the house, up left of center. A picket fence extends from the house across the stage to the wings down right, with a gate near the wings. Up center is a wooden bench, close to the house. Down right of center is a well-curb, with a bucket of water to be pulled up by the windlass. A churn stands on the porch or in the yard near the door. A milk bucket is inverted over one of the fence pickets. Other properties appropriate to a rural door yard may be shown. There are flowers growing along the fence and at the side of the house. The stage is covered with a brown or green groundcloth, and grass mats ad lib.*

LIGHTS. *Foots and borders up full. Yellow bunches from both sides, until cue. Then blend in rose bunches from left, for sunset effect at curtain.*

MUSIC. *For rise, "Old Fashioned Rose."*

As the curtain rises, JIM enters from the right, back of the fence. He carries a buggy whip in his hand.

JIM.

(Coming through the gate, calls.)
Marthy! Marthy!

MARTHY.

(*Calls from inside the house.*)

I'm comin', Jim. Don't f'rgit, Lissie.

MARTHY enters from inside the house, carrying a basket.

MARTHY.

Land, I f'rgot the robe. (*Hands JIM the basket.*)
Here, Jim, put them eggs in the buggy.

JIM.

(*Taking eggs.*)

Yep. Ten dozen?

MARTHY.

Yep. (*Calls.*) Lissie, Lissie! (*Tying veil around bonnet.*) I wonder if we hadn't better take that pork over to Mandy's. (*Calls.*) Lissie! Lissie, are ye deaf?

LISSIE enters from the house. *Music louder as she appears, then soft.*

LISSIE.

(*Standing in the doorway.*)

You call?

MARTHY.

F'r the land sake, did I call? I've been screechin' my lungs plumb out!

LISSIE.

Lovely, peaceful day, ain't it?

MARTHY.

Oh, you shet up about the day. Get me the lap-robe; hurry!

LISSIE.

Yes, ma'am. (*She goes into the house. Music stops.*)

MARTHY.

Land! A hul corn field could grow under her feet while she's gettin' from here to the kitchen.

JIM.

(*Looking at the sky.*)

Wonder if it's goin' to rain.

MARTHY.

Wish't it would. Them raspberries will burn up sure if it don't rain soon. And they're finer this year than they've be'n in a age.

LISSIE *enters with robe.*

MARTHY.

Lissie, ef I ain't home f'r supper, which I think I will be, don't tech that cold roast. I'm savin' that f'r tea when the Jenkins come tomorrow. (*Takes robe.*)

GRANDPA *enters from the house and crosses toward the gate.*

MARTHY.

Where be you goin', grandpa?

GRANDPA.

(*Very nervously.*)

Think I'll step over to Auntie Purvis's f'r a spell.

(*LISSIE goes back into the house.*)

MARTHY.

(*To GRANDPA.*)

Don't fergit that thread and sugar from the store.

GRANDPA.

No, but it's a mite too hot to go jest yit. (*Goes briskly out right, through gate.*)

JIM.

(*Looking after GRANDPA.*)

Goin' over to Auntie Purvis's again. (*Suspiciously.*) Suppose them old folks was to take it into their heads to git married. Wish we could do something to discourage father from goin' there so often.

MARTHY.

Oh, I guess we could stop it if worse come to worse. What would they live on, anyway?

JIM.

Father's got close to a thousand dollars saved up into the bank. (*Auto horn is sounded by PHIL, off stage, right.*)

MARTHY.

(*Looking off right.*)

I declare, who's that slick lookin' feller into the automobile? Wonder where he comes from and what he's doin' here. I ain't saw him before, hev you?

JIM.

(*Looking.*)

No; I ain't never seen him before. Looks to me like one of them sharpers. I got my suspicions of fellers that dresses like that. A body that's so fixed up on the outside must do it because he's lackin' inside. Well, come on; Mollie's tired standing.

(MARTHY and JIM *exeunt through gate.*)

LISSIE enters from the house, and runs to the gate.

LISSIE.

Oh, I'm glad they're gone. I'm glad they're gone, and I wish the old house, the dishes and everything would all burn up before they git back.

GRANDPA enters quickly from the right.

LISSIE.

(*As he approaches.*)

What's the matter, Grandpa? Did Marthy shoo you back again?

GRANDPA.

(*Coming through the gate.*)

No, Lissie; I fergot my glasses.

LISSIE.

(*Runs to bench by house and picks up glasses.*)

Here they are, jest where you left them. (*Putting arms around his neck.*) Ain't ye glad they're gone, Grandpa—Jim and Marthy?

GRANDPA.

(*Furtively.*)

Hesh, hesh, Lissie; ye mustn't talk so.

LISSIE.

Oh, they're way down the road; then can't hear. I'll hurry and do the dishes, Grandpa, then I'll come over to Auntie Purvis's and read to you. I've got the most beautiful story, Grandpa.

GRANDPA.

(*In a frightened whisper.*)

Where did ye git it, Lissie?

LISSIE.

Tillie Jones give it to me.

GRANDPA.

(*Eagerly.*)

An' it's a good un?

LISSIE.

(*Rapturously.*)

It's grand, Grandpa.

GRANDPA.

Come over, Lissie. Auntie Purvis an' me will be settin' under the grape arbor.

LISSIE.

(*Throws arms around GRANDPA.*)

Oh, Grandpa, I wish you an' me an' Auntie Purvis could live together always, an' thet everybody else was dead.

GRANDPA.

Sh, sh, honey. That ain't Christian. But some day, meybe, honey; some day.

AUNTIE PURVIS *enters from the right, very much excited.*

AUNTIE.

Lissie, Lissie!

LISSIE.

Auntie Purvis, we was jest talkin' 'bout you.

AUNTIE.

(*Excited.*)

Hev ye seen William, Lissie?

LISSIE.

No, is he lost?

AUNTIE.

(*Coming through the gate.*)

Yes, he has be'n since early this morning. And here it is near noon and he ain't come fer his milk yit. Land, I'm so worried! Ef anything should happen to thet cat—

GRANDPA.

(*Patting her hand.*)

Now, now, Mary, don't git flustered or it'll make your head ache ag'in. Come and set under the arbor in the shade. William will be home, sure as cats is cats. (*Leads her toward right.*)

AUNTIE.

(*Going with him.*)

Well, I'm so worried, Ben.

GRANDPA.

Course ye be honey, but he'll come back. William will come back. Come along now honey; come along.

(*They go out through the gate.*)

AUNTIE.

Come over, Lissie. (GRANDPA and AUNTIE *excunt right.*)

LISSIE.

Just as soon as I git the dishes washed. (*Leans over the fence and watches them go.*)

LEMUEL *enters down left, crosses behind LISSIE and put his arm around her.*

LISSIE.

(*Swings around angrily.*)

Say, Lem Hecker, you quit that!

LEM.

Oh, say now! Don't pretend ye don't like it.

LISSIE.

(*Hotly.*)

You do it again, ever, and I'll slap your face!

LEM.

Oh, quit y'r kiddin'.

LISSIE.

Well, you'll see! (*Starts for house. LEM steps in front of her.*) You let me by!

LEM.

People who are so dinged poor shouldn't be so durn stuck up with folks that is somebody.

LISSIE.

(*Tries to pass him.*)

Aw, you ain't somebody.

LEM.

(*Still blocking the way.*)

I'm the best catch in this town. I can take the pick of all the gals. There's Hetty Thomas. She's pretty, takes pianer lessons, an' she's jes' crazy 'bout me.

LISSIE.

If you was about me long I'd be crazy, too. You let me by.

LEM.

Smart, ain't ye? If you don't let me be y'r steady you'll never git another. Why, I might even marry ye some day. I don't care ef ye ain't educated or nothin', I like ye, Lissie, an' ye better not let me slip. Say, I'll buy a little farm—

LISSIE.

(*In a fury.*)

I don't want a farm! I hate farms! An' I'm as educated as you are, Lem Hecker. I can read an' write beautiful—Grandpa says so—an' you spell rotten. I could hardly read what you wrote me last Sunday. Now, you can let me by, 'cause I gotta wash them dishes.

LEM.

Marry me, Lissie, an' ye won't have to wash no more dishes.

LISSIE.

I won't! I won't marry ye, if I have to wash dishes till I die and then wash some more.

LEM.

(*Angrily stepping back.*)

Darn you, I wouldn't marry ye now if ye begged me to. But I'll get even, believe me.

LISSIE.

(*Running to house.*)

What'll ye do? Lie 'bout me same as ye did 'bout Sadie? Lem, go on an' take piano lessons with Hetty Thomas. (*Exits into house, laughing.*)

LEM.

Darn her! She'll want me to marry her some day. I'll lead her on, then I'll throw her over an' marry some other girl, darned if I don't. (*Exits down left.*)

(*Music—“Old Fashioned Rose.”*)

LISSIE *peeps out of door, enters with pail and crosses to well.* PHIL *sounds auto horn, off right.* LISSIE *jumps.*

LISSIE.

Ugh! What's that?

PHIL *runs on from right, through gate.*

PHIL.

Excuse me, Miss, I'd be awfully grateful for a drink of that water. May I have a dipper full?

LISSIE.

(*Bashfully.*)

Yes, sir.

PHIL.

Thanks.

(LISSIE *starts to pull up bucket from well.*)

PHIL.

(*Quickly.*)

Let me help you. (*He pulls it up and puts it down beside well curb.*) Hot, isn't it? (*Drinks.*) Guess the crops would be grateful for a little rain.

LISSIE.

Yes, sir.

PHIL.

I was mighty thirsty. This is a pretty place. Is it your home?

LISSIE.

No, sir, not mine. I haven't any home. Jim and Marthy Simpson and Grandpa live here. It's their home.

PHIL.

And where do you live?

LISSIE.

I don't live; I work here. I've worked here since I was eight years old.

PHIL.

Haven't you a father or mother?

LISSIE.

No, sir; they're dead.

PHIL.

Gee, that's tough, isn't it, kid?

LISSIE.

I'm not a kid, I'm nearly sixteen. But it is kinda tough.

GRANDPA *enters from the right.*

LISSIE.

Here's Grandpa, now.

PHIL.

Grandpa?

LISSIE.

Yes; Grandpa Simpson. (*Starts to lift pail.*)

PHIL.

Here, let me take that. (*Carries pail to door.*)

LISSIE.

(*Taking pail at door.*)

Thanks. (*Looks up at him.*) Oh—your eyes are blue, ain't they?

PHIL.

(*Somewhat embarrassed.*)

Why—yes—I think so.

LISSIE.

Yes, they are. (*Exits into house.*)

(*Music stops.*)

PHIL.

(*Laughs.*)

How do you do, Mr. Simpson? I dropped in to beg a drink of water.

GRANDPA.

(*Who has come through gate and crossed, sits on bench, under window.*)

You're right welcome, sir; right welcome. Stranger in town?

PHIL.

Yes, I'm in the automobile manufacturing business in Detroit.

GRANDPA.

Do tell. Business pretty good?

PHIL.

Yes, indeed, we're doing fine. And how's your business?

GRANDPA.

I ain't in no business, sir; not now. I wish I was. Set down.

PHIL.

Thanks. (*Sits on bench with GRANDPA.*)

GRANDPA.

Jim and Marthy's good to me, but when folks is old they needs their own home. Young folks ain't got much patience with old folks.

PHIL.

I guess that's right. Your wife is dead, eh?

GRANDPA.

Yes, nigh on to twenty-two years.

PHIL.

Well, why not marry again? I had a grandmother who was sixty-five years old and married again. Yes, sir. Ran away, too. God love her. (*Little pause.*) My grandmother raised me.

GRANDPA.

(*Confidentially.*)

Well, betwix' you an' me, I am thinkin' some of gittin' married. Sh! There's Auntie Purvis; she lives with her widder daughter, Mrs. Hecker. She ain't happy, Mary ain't, an' we've been courtin' some. And if we could only find a way—ye see, I ain't got only about a thousand dollars saved into the bank, and we might live a long time. An' if we was to go agin our children—not but what they ain't good to us—yes, sir, good as gold—

PHIL.

(*Quickly.*)

A thousand dollars? You say you have a thousand dollars in the bank? (*Aside.*) Gee! (*Aloud.*) I'll do it. Yes, sir, I'll do it. You give me this money, Grandpa, and I'll invest it for you in my automobile business. Others have gotten rich, why not you? How would you like to be rich, Grandpa, with your own home, horses, carriages and automobiles? Yes, I'll invest that money for you for the sake of my dear old grandmother.

GRANDPA.

Wall, I swan! That's kind o' you, sir.

PHIL.

Not at all. I like to see old folks happy. Come

on, take a ride in my car. We can go down to the bank and get the money.

GRANDPA.

(*Nervously.*)

Wall, I ain't never be'n in one o' them automobillies.

LISSIE *appears at the door.*

PHIL.

Oh, there's nothing to be afraid of. Come on. Perhaps the young lady would like to go with us.

GRANDPA.

Lissie? (*Hesitates.*) Well, now——

PHIL.

Oh, come on now. I'm lonely and we'll talk the automobile business over.

GRANDPA.

Wall, wall; I 'low I might. Lissie.

LISSIE.

Yes, Grandpa. GRANDPA.

Put on your bonnet. We're going for an automobile ride. LISSIE.

(*Delighted.*)

Oh, Grandpa! (*Exits quickly into the house.*)

GRANDPA.

(*Reconsidering.*)

Don't know as I ought to go. Marthy, my son James' wife——

LISSIE *enters with hat on.*

LISSIE.

(*Grabbing GRANDPA's arm.*)

Oh, Grandpa! I'm most scared to death, ain't you? (Lively music.)

GRANDPA.

Wall, I 'low I am a little mite oneeasy.

PHIL.

Come along. Nothing to be afraid of. I'll drive slow. (*Goes out through the gate.*)

LISSIE.

(*Excitedly taking GRANDPA's arm.*)

Oh—hoo—Grandpa! (*They follow PHIL out, right.*)

PHIL.

(*Off right.*)

That's right; jump in, jump in. All fixed? (*Toots horn.*)

SALLY HECKER enters, down left, and starts at sound of horn.

SALLY.

Land! What in Sam Hill is that? (*Crosses to gate.*) An automobile. Well, if it ain't got Grandpa Simpson and Lissie Brown in it! Fer the love of lemons, who is that feller? (*Calls.*) Marthy! Marthy!

LEM enters, down left.

SALLY.

Lemuel, come here quick. Who is that feller? I never seed him afore. Never heard Marthy speak of no city relation or nothin'. Who in Sam Hill is he?

(*Music stops.*)

LEM.

How do I know, Ma? Must have just arrived in town or you'd know all about him.

(*PHIL sounds auto horn in distance.*)

SALLY.

(Sharply.)

None of y'r back slack, or I'll knock y'r head plumb off y'r neck. Wonder where Marthy is! She must hev went away or Grandpa and Lissie wouldn't be trapsin' round. And what you doin' over here, Lem? Don't you go hangin' round after that Lissie. Don't fergit y'r a Hecker. I don't want no paupers on my farm while I live. When I'm dead I can't holler, but while I live you harken to me. (Calls.) Marthy! Marthy! (Pause.) Yes, she's went. Heard her alarm clock bangin' away afore five. (Looks off left.) There's William in the currant bushes. (Calls.) Here, Willie, Willie—nice cat. Ma's worryin' her head off over him. No siree, Lem. Marriage is a pretty long business. I never was one to complain, but it seems to me that I've been Mrs. Hecker ever since I was born. No siree, I don't believe a woman can ever git used to bein' married. It's such a serious business—much more serious than dyin'. No matter what ye suffer, ye die sometime after a while. Now, when Hecker died—

LISSIE enters from the right, and runs to the house.

SALLY.

Why, Lissie Brown; where hev you been?

LISSIE.

(Running to the house.)

'Scuse me; I can't stop. I've been to Heaven, that's all.

SALLY.

Where's y'r grandpa? He be'n to Heaven, too?

LISSIE.

(*On the porch.*)

He stopped over to see Auntie Purvis. (*Goes into house.*)

SALLY.

Well, what d'ye know about that? Come on, Lem, she can't throw me off no scent. I'm goin' to git to the bottom of this. Come on. (*Starts to go, up left.*)

LEM.

Oh, I'm comin'. (*Hesitates, looking after LISSIE.*)

SALLY.

Then come on.

(*Both exeunt up left.*)

LISSIE *enters from the house, runs to gate and looks off right.*

LISSIE.

Oh—oo—They're comin'. (*Starts for house.*)

MARTHY *enters right, through gate.*

MARTHY.

(*Calls sharply.*)

Lissie!

LISSIE.

Yes, ma'am.

MARTHY.

Where's Grandpa?

LISSIE.

Oh, he'll be along pretty soon. (*Goes into house.*)

JIM *enters, right, through gate.*

MARTHY.

Jim.

JIM.

Yes?

MARTHY.

Jim, Grandpa's not home yit. I declare if he ain't been gone more'n an hour. He went down town to git me a spool of sixty white and two pounds of sugar. Bet he stopped at Heckers' to see Auntie Purvis; and right in the middle of the day, too.

JIM.

(*Looking off right.*)

Here he comes now, just turnin' out of Heckers' yard. Wouldn't say nothin' to him if I was you, Marthy. (Pause.)

GRANDPA enters, right, through gate.

MARTHY.

(*Reprovingly.*)

Grandpa, I should think you'd know better'n to be galavantin' around in the sun, sech a day as this.

GRANDPA.

(*Meekly.*)

Thet's so, thet's so--by ericky. Say, Marthy, I clean plumb f'rgot thet there thread and sugar; clean plumb f'rgot 'em.

MARTHY.

Well, I never, Grandpa Simpson! Whatever hev you be'n doin' this hour?

GRANDPA.

Had a leetle business with a feller down town, and then I stopped a bit to Mary Purvis's on the way back.

MARTHY.

Business!

GRANDPA.

(*Nervously.*)

Mighty hot, ain't it?

MARTHY.

Hot? Well, I should say it was. You'd better set into the shade and keep quiet. (*Goes into house.*)

(GRANDPA *sits on bench.*)

JIM.

(*Trying to be diplomatic.*)

You be'n spendin' quite a bit of time to the Heckers' lately, Father.

GRANDPA.

Yes, Mary Purvis and me takes a lot of pleasure in each other's company. Old folks feels a sort of drawin' together, I guess, Jimmie; sort of drawin' together, like as if they had somethin' in common.

MARTHY *enters from the house, without her hat.*

JIM.

(*To GRANDPA.*)

If you was a young feller, now, folks would be sayin' you was kind of sparkin' Auntie Purvis.

MARTHY.

(*Sarcastically.*)

Yes, an' I wouldn't be surprised a mite if they was sayin' so anyhow.

GRANDPA.

(*Rising.*)

Calculate I'll putter around the garden a little while.

MARTHY.

(*Emphatically.*)

I calculate you won't do no sich thing; not in this beatin' sun. You set right into the shade until four o'clock, anyway.

GRANDPA.

(*Meekly.*)

Now, Marthy, don't ye guess I'm old enough to look out f'r myself?

(*Music, softly, "Old Time Wedding Day."*)

MARTHY.

You ain't so young as ye once was, and you'd be overdoin' or gittin' a stroke or somethin' if I wasn't always at ye. (*Goes into house.*)

JIM.

Calculate you'd better listen to Marthy, Father. (*Goes into house.*)

AUNTIE PURVIS *enters quickly from right, through gate.*

AUNTIE.

Well, Ben.

GRANDPA.

(*Nervously.*)

Sh, honey!

AUNTIE.

Land, what did ye start to tell me when Sally come in?

GRANDPA.

Set down, honey. Folks is beginnin' to 'spect I'm courtin' ye.

AUNTIE.

(*Sits with him.*)

Well, ye be, been't ye?

GRANDPA.

(*Chuckles.*)

I reckon I be. I don't see why old folks ain't entitled to do what they like as well as young folks be.

AUNTIE.

I 'low it's cause they ain't got no spirit left to

stand up f'r themselves an' fight their own battles. When y'r hair gits white, it seems as if y'r courage sort of oozes out.

GRANDPA.

(*Courageously.*)

Well, I'm goin' to speak right out about it pretty soon. I'm goin' to tell Jim and Marthy thet you an' me is goin' to git married an' then—an' then—by gum (*slaps his knee*), we'll do it!

AUNTIE.

(*Fearfully.*)

They won't never let us.

GRANDPA.

(*Emphatically.*)

We'll elope.

AUNTIE.

Land! Whatever would we live on, I'd like to know? We ain't able to work stidy, an' ef we was to go elopin' an' git our folks mad, where would we be?

GRANDPA.

I got more'n a thousand dollars saved up into the bank.

AUNTIE.

(*Smiles.*)

Drawin' most a dollar a week interest.

GRANDPA.

There must be some way.

AUNTIE.

(*Rises.*)

Well, when you discover it, come round an' tell me, an' we'll go keepin' house right sudden.

GRANDPA.

Mary. (*Pulls her back to seat.*) Sh! I found

a way. We're a-goin' to make it. You an' me kin git married an' nobody say a word.

AUNTIE.

(*In astonishment.*)

Ben Simpson!

GRANDPA.

I've done so. It's a investment. I'm a-goin' to invest the money that's into the bank. I'm goin' to invest it so that it will bring us enough to live on fine an' not be beholden to nobody.

AUNTIE.

What be ye goin' to invest into, Ben?

GRANDPA.

The automobilly manufacturing business. I met a feller an' I took a shine to him, an' fore I knowed it, I told him about you an' me, an' he seemed to understand that somehow old folks ain't allowed to do what they want to. He had a grandmother an' he knowed how it is. She eloped an' got married spite of all; she ran away.

(*Music stops.*)

AUNTIE.

Wall, I swan, Ben Simpson!

GRANDPA.

An' I told him I didn't hev but what leetle money I had in the bank, an' he said, "Grandpa, it will do, an' you'll be rich an' hev horses an' automobillies." Wall, I looked close into his eyes an' they was stdy an' clear an' seemed honest to me, so I puts out my hand an' says, "Young feller, the money is your'n." An' that's what I done.

AUNTIE.

Did he promise?

GRANDPA.

He done so. He said it wasn't on my account he was takin' the trouble, but on account of his grandmother.

AUNTIE.

I guess you dast to trust him all right ef he talks like that there. You know I got a leetle money myself—three hundred dollars to bury me with. If your money'll keep us good, yours an' mine together will keep us better. An' to-morrow I'll git it out of the bank an' we'll invest the hull thing.

GRANDPA.

(Enthusiastically.)

We'll do it, Mary, we'll do it. He says it'll be a year before we git any dividends. But we ain't so old we can't wait a year. And won't our children be surprised? Won't they, just! (Hugs AUNTIE.)

SALLY *enters right.*

SALLY.

Well, Ma, here ye be, an' me frightened nigh into nits a-lookin' f'r ye. (Comes through gate.) I declare, y're more trouble to keep track of than William.

MARTHY *enters from house.*

SALLY.

(Rapidly.)

Marthy, when did ye git back? Great doin's since ye be'n away. A feller with a automobile has be'n drivin' some folks around town. He's livin' down at the hotel, an' if we don't hear of houses bein' robbed er the bank broke into, I don't know nothin'. I seen him settin' on the hotel steps dressed fit to kill. Marthy, I'll bet he had them clothes made special

fer him. An' what d'ye suppose he had stickin' into his tie? A di'mond bigger'n a shell pea!

Lissie enters from house and listens.

SALLY.

An' yaller shoes that come no higher'n his ankles. An' sich socks! Marthy, them socks would have stamped him a sharper if nothin' else had. They was silk, an' lavender; believe me 'r not, but I seen 'em close.

MARTHY.

Land! I wonder the town marshal don't put him in the lock-up. Be ye sure them clothes was made special f'r him?

Lem enters from right and comes through gate.

GRANDPA.

Yes, them clothes was made special f'r him by a tailor, an' they cost eighty-five dollars. And thet ain't all. His shirts was made special, and they cost six dollars and fifty cents a shirt, an' he laid out ten dollars f'r thet wiggly straw hat.

(Music, "Old Fashioned Rose.")

MARTHY.

(Suspiciously.)

How come you to know so much about him?

GRANDPA.

(Innocently.)

Oh, him an' me is friends. He's into the automo-billy business an' makes scads of money.

SALLY.

That's what he says! Ma, you come on home! Lem, you see thet the doors is locked tight tonight, an' the winders fastened. Thet city feller's a burglar,

an' I know it. Some folks ain't particular what friends they picks up with! (AUNTIE, SALLY and LEM *exeunt down right.*)

MARTHY.

(*Severely.*)

Grandpa Simpson, I'm ashamed of you! (Goes into the house.)

(GRANDPA *sinks on bench, bewildered.*)

LISSIE.

(*Runs and kneels beside GRANDPA.*)

Oh, Grandpa! Wasn't his eyes beautiful?

CURTAIN.

THE CITY FELLER

THE SECOND ACT.

SCENE: *The settin'-room of the Simpsons' home; just a year later, after supper. A plain or cottage interior, with an outside door and a window at the back, through which is seen a glimpse of country landscape. The door is right of center, and the window left of center. In the left wall, up stage, is a door which is reached by a short flight of three steps. In the same wall, near the audience, is a large door or opening, hung with portieres, leading to the kitchen. In the center of the right wall is a fireplace with mantel-shelf. The furniture is such as would be found in the average country home. There is a table down right, with a dishpan containing some dishes. The window at the back has the sash raised, and it has a roller shade which can be drawn down. Directly under the window is a couch. Near the table is a chair, and there is another chair down stage, left of center. Other furniture may be disposed at the discretion of the director. On the mantel-shelf a shaded lamp is burning. An alarm clock also is on the mantel. Bare floor, with rag carpet or rugs.*

LIGHTS: *Foots and borders up full, until GRANDPA blows out the light, when all stage lights are extinguished. Blue bunches back of flat to show moonlight through door and window, throughout the act.*

MUSIC: *Lively, to raise curtain.*

As the curtain rises, MARTHY is washing dishes at the table. JIM enters from outside.

JIM.

Why ain't Lissie washin' them dishes? (*Fills and lights his pipe.*)

MARTHY.

I let her go to a picnic. Jes' got to let her go out onet in a while or the hull neighborhood would be condemning me. But when I was her age I'd be'n glad of a comfortable home and decent duds to wear, an' good, wholesome food in my stomach, without gad-ding about looking for amusements. She went to a picture show last night. This town is gettin' to be one seething mass of temptation for young folks. Never seen nothin' like it. The hull community has gone plumb to perdition. Hear about Sally Hecker makin' a fool of herself over old Orrin Ruddy? Never seen such brazen flirtations goin' on; an' her with a growed son. If she had to work as hard as I do she'd be glad to go to bed nights, 'stid o' settin' up holdin' hands. I peeked through the shutters last night. It was most nine o'clock, an' there they set like a couple of old goslin's a-gazin' at the moon. (*Picks up pile of dishes.*) Sech things makes me sick! (*Exit down left, though portieres.*)

JIM.

Where's the matches?

MARTHY.

(*Off stage.*)

Ye'll have to come and git some. I'm so durn tired I f'rgot to fill the holder.

(*JIM goes out, down left.*)

LISSIE bursts in through the back door, closes it, runs up the stairs and hurries out the door at the top of the steps. As she is going out, LEM enters through the back door, closes it and looks curiously about as though in search of someone. LISSIE, without her hat, reappears at the top of the steps. She shows disgust at seeing LEM.

LISSIE.

I should think you'd get tired, taggin' where you're not wanted.

LEM.

I'm a-goin' to tag ye till ye'll say ye'll have me.

LISSIE.

(Slowly descending steps.)

Then ye'll tag till ye die.

LEM.

Yes, 'cause y'r mashed on thet crook automobile feller that took ye ridin'. As if he'd remember the likes of you—a city feller that flirts with every gal he meets!

GRANDPA enters through the back door.

GRANDPA.

Lissie, been't ye back early?

LISSIE.

(Crossing right.)

I guess I be, a mite.

(LEM, scowling sulkily, goes out the back door.)

GRANDPA.

Lissie, I got a letter f'r ye, from the post-office.

LISSIE.

A letter for me, Grandpa?

GRANDPA.

(*Mysteriously.*)

Yep! (*Looks all around and gives her a letter.*)

LISSIE.

Oh, Grandpa, do you guess it's from him? (*Examines envelope.*) Looks like city writin'.

GRANDPA.

(*Putting on his specks.*)

Let's see. (*Holds letter close to his specks.*) Yep, it do. An' it come from Detroit; see that? (*Shows post-mark.*)

LISSIE.

Let's see. (*Takes letter, and spells.*) D-e-t-r-o-i-t. Yes, sir. Oh, do you guess it's from him?

LEM appears at the window, listening.

GRANDPA.

Yep, I sartin' do. Ef he had ever wrote me I could tell the writin', but as he ain't never— (*Takes letter and looks at it again.*)

LISSIE.

(*Thrilled.*)

Shall I open it?

GRANDPA.

I 'low I would. Meybe he's wrote somethin' about them dividends. It's a year today.

LISSIE.

(*Opens letter and reads.*)

"Dear Little Friend: I've thought of your sweet face a lot in the last twelve months, and I'm coming to see you. And I have news for Grandpa. Will deliver it in person. I wonder if you will be glad to see me. I've made up my mind to ask you a very important question. When I think of you, I wish I were a better fellow, you are so sweet and good. Well,

I shall see you almost as soon as you receive this.
Phil, 'The City Feller.' ”

GRANDPA.

(*Excited.*)

He's goin' to bring them dividends, Lissie!

LISSIE.

Oh, Grandpa, won't we be just happy?

(LEM smiles *darkly* and leaves window.)

GRANDPA.

I'll jest run over an' tell Mary. Lord, Lord, he'll bring them dividends, sure as pigs is pigs. (Goes out the back door.)

MARTHY.

(Calls off left.)

Be thet you, Lissie?

LISSIE.

(Jumps quickly, starts to put the letter in her pocket, and drops it.)

Yessum. (Hurries through door down left.)

LEM enters quickly through back door, picks up letter and reads it.

LEM.

So! He's comin' here, is he!

SALLY enters quickly through back door.

SALLY.

(*Seeing him.*)

Lemuel! Well, I thought you was to the picnic.

LEM.

(*Half defiantly.*)

I'm here, ain't I?

SALLY.

I see ye be. I hain't stone blind. Say, Lem, who do you think I seen, big as life, goin' into the hotel jes' now? Nobody but thet city feller thet was here last August—the automobile feller. Wonder what he's doin' here again.

LEM.

Reckon now maybe somebody'll find out who chloro-formed Mr. Smith at the bank an' stole three hundred dollars a year ago. Maybe he thinks we're a lot of jays here. (*Boastfully.*) The town marshal kin be fooled, maybe, but nobody can't fool me.

SALLY.

Well, what did I say at the time? Didn't I say there'd be a robbery? I always did suspicion thet feller. Nobody ain't wearin' silk socks f'r nothin'.

LEM.

Well, you wait. (*Winks slyly, and goes out back door.*)

MARTHY enters from down left.

MARTHY.

Hello, Sally.

SALLY.

(*Eagerly.*)

Say, Marthy, thet city feller thet wore the silk socks is back in town! Now maybe the mystery of the bank robbery will be found out. Say, Marthy, set down, do. I jes' must unbosom myself. Marthy, I'm goin' to be married again! (*Sits in chair at right.*)

MARTHY.

(*Amazed.*)

Sally Hecker! (*Sinks into chair at left.*)

SALLY.

(*With a giggle.*)

Yes, I be. Guess who.

MARTHY.

(*Promptly.*)

Orrin Ruddy.

SALLY.

Oh, you git out! How'd ye guess that? I'll have to do my hair with a iron after this. Thet's one thing about gittin' married. Ye can't wear crimpin' pins. When a man's asleep his elbows is so remarkable. My first husband nearly knocked my teeth in, once. Men wave their arms so in their sleep. It'd be as much as my life is worth to wear crimpin' pins, ye might be stabbed to the heart with one. Orrin isn't no beauty, an' he's seventy. But oh, how I do love that man! The way a woman loves a man before she's married is too beautiful f'r words. You believe in him so then. My, how I believed in my first husband! He couldn't say a thing that I didn't give one gasp of love and swallow it whole. I remember one night when it rained and he stayed till it was through and the walk had dried off, we set on the porch in the moonlight, an' oh, Marthy, when I think of the things Hecker said to me that night—well, speak no ill of the dead, but he told me he'd die a millionaire. An' ye can judge of the rest by that. Well (*rising and crossing to back door*), I must bake some cake. Orrin is comin' to tea tonight and I don't want nothin' to look skimpy. Orrin is always so hungry. Love never affects a man's appetite. (*Returns and sits.*) Hecker's mother always talked about how much he ate when he went to see her. She done it as a sort of dig to me. I always told her he ate twice as much at home. But he didn't, be-

cause nobody could eat more. But Hecker always looked hungry, he was so long and thin. It's a blessin' Orrin is seventy. At thet age ye haven't any mother-in-laws. (*Sighs, rises and crosses to door again.*) Oh, Marthy, I feel so strange! But I never did like the name of Hecker. (*Comes back and sits.*) I knew a man named Welsby Fry once. Welsby is such a distinguished name. I might have married him, only mother wouldn't hear to it. When he was callin' she used to keep poundin' on the floor overhead. No mother would dare pound on the floor now-adays. Nowadays the mother is out in the kitchen a-cookin' a hot supper to try to make the feller stay a little longer. An' even with all thet, there generally ain't no man to stay. Well, I must go an' bake thet cake. (*Rises.*) I'll come over this evening and tell ye all about it. I ain't got no time now. (*Goes out back door.*)

MARTHY.

(*Who has risen expectantly every time that SALLY did.*)

The durn fool!

(*Music, "Old Time Wedding Day."*)

LISSIE enters from down left.

MARTHY.

Lissie, run upstairs and close them front windows. I think there's a storm comin' on. (*Goes out down left.*)

LISSIE.

Yessum. (*Starts to run up the stairs.*)

GRANDPA, *greatly excited*, enters through the back door.

GRANDPA.

Lissie! Lissie! Put on y'r bonnet an' come with us.
We're elopin'!

AUNTIE PURVIS *enters after GRANDPA.*

LISSIE.

Oh, Grandpa! (*Runs down the steps.*)

GRANDPA.

Sh! The dividends will be here today, I'm sartin'.
An' me and Mary ain't a-goin' to wait no longer.
We're goin' to the parson's on the corner, an' we
want you f'r a witness.

AUNTIE.

(*Timorously.*)

It don't seem right cautious. It'd be better to wait
till the money is right in our pockets.

GRANDPA.

(*Stoutly.*)

I ain't a-goin' to wait no longer! I got forty
dollars left, and if we git found out thet forty will
keep us till them dividends come, so come right along,
Lissie.

LISSIE.

All right, Grandpa. I'll be right over. Oh, goody,
goody! I'm glad.

GRANDPA.

(*Chuckling.*)

Hurry now, Lissie. Hurry.

(GRANDPA and AUNTIE *go out back door.* LISSIE
runs upstairs and exits. NOTE.—AUNTIE now
changes to silk dress for her next entrance.)

MARTHY *appears at door, down left.*

MARTHY.

(Calling.)

Lissie! Ain't ye closed them windows yit?

LISSIE.

(Upstairs.)

Yessum. I'm closin' them.

(MARTHY goes out again, down left.)

LEM enters through back door, looks all around and goes out, down left. LISSIE comes out of door at top of steps, wearing her hat. She runs quickly down the steps and hurries out the back door. MARTHY enters quickly, down left.

MARTHY.

(Calls angrily.)

Lissie! Lissie!

LEM enters after her.

LEM.

I tell ye, it's true. I knowed it when he was here last August, and she kissed him when he went away.

(Music stops.)

MARTHY.

Kissed him, a stranger? Lem, you ain't lyin' to me?

LEM.

(Convincingly.)

No, I ain't.

MARTHY.

(Bitterly.)

After me a-bein' a mother to her, givin' her a respectable home since she was five, and now she turns 'round and disgraces me.

LEM.

Yep. And me willin' to marry her.

MARTHY.

(*Angrily.*)

I'll turn her out, bag and baggage, this night!
(*Turns to him.*) Did ye say she's be'n gittin' letters
from him?

LEM.

Yes, and I kin prove it.

MARTHY.

(*Calls.*)

Lissie! Lissie! (*Pause.*) Where has she went?

LEM.

Guess she's gone out. I'll go look for her. (*Goes out back door.*)

JIM enters from down left.

JIM.

Don't be too sudden, Marthy. Better wait till
y're sartin'.

MARTHY.

Well, she's be'n actin' pretty wild lately. Be'n to
a picture show twice in three weeks now. I ain't
a-goin' to wait till she disgraces us all like Sadie
Betts done. If I find it's true that that sporty gam-
bling feller from the city has be'n writin' to her, out
she goes this very night!

JIM.

(*In alarm, at back door.*)

Here comes Sally Hecker again. (*Hurries out
down left.*)

SALLY bounces in, through the back door.

SALLY.

I don't know what to do, Marthy. My cake has
gone flatter'n a flounder. I'm jest in a daze, that's

all. Well, I'll have to make another. Hev ye any raisins an' citron, Marthy?

MARTHY.

No, I ain't got a raisin in the house.

SALLY.

Marthy, think of me marryin' ag'in. (*Sits at left.*) Mr. Ruddy is different from my first husband. He's seventy. Lem's father was twenty-one. I feel so queer. I got such a buzzin' in my ears. I wonder if I'm bilious. I wonder where mother is. Thought she might be over here. Wish ye could a seen her face when I told her I was goin' to git married agin. (*Rises.*) Guess I'll go home and drink a cup of strong tea. Never was so upset in all my born days.

MARTHY.

You must try to calm yourself, Sally. Ain't nothin' done by gittin' so excited.

SALLY.

I can't help it, Marthy. Look at the way the crimp's gone out of my hair. And I twitch so my nose goes jes' like a rabbit's. Thet's the worst about men, the way they upset you. An' it's so long since I was upset by a man. (*Goes out back door.*)

MARTHY.

(*At door, calls back.*)

Jim! Here's Grandpa comin' now. He just left Auntie Purvis at her door. Better talk to him now.

(*Music, "Old Time Wedding Day."*)

JIM comes in from down left.

MARTHY.

And let me know when Lissie comes in. (*Goes out, down left.*)

GRANDPA enters through the back door.

JIM.

Where ye be'n, Father?

GRANDPA.

(*Evasively.*)

Jes' f'r a little walk, Jimmie. Jes' f'r a little walk.

JIM.

What ye all dressed up for? Be'n to a weddin'?
(*Laughs.*)

GRANDPA.

(*Startled, hesitates.*)

Calculate I have, Jimmie. (Takes hat off and puts it on mantle.)

JIM.

Father, I've be'n thinkin' about buyin' the Hillger eighty thet lays next to my place. (Sits at right.)

GRANDPA.

Um. A likely farm, Jimmie. How much does Hillger ask? (Sits at left).

JIM.

Twenty-three hundred.

MARTHY enters from down left, puts a cover on the table, etc.

GRANDPA.

It's wu'th it, every cent.

JIM.

I've got twelve hundred cash. Now, you've got considerable into the bank payin' ye four per cent. Why not loan it to me on a mortgage? I'll give ye six.

GRANDPA.

(*Nervously.*)

Why—Jimmie, I'd be glad to loan it to ye. No-

body I'd loan it to sooner, but—er—but, Jimmie, I ain't got no money into the bank.

JIM.

(*Rising, and speaking in a loud voice.*)
Ain't got no money into the bank?

(MARTHY, *disgusted, goes out down left.*)

GRANDPA.

(*Shakes his head no.*)

JIM.

(*Sharply.*)

What ye done with it?

GRANDPA.

(*Gently.*)

Now, Jimmie, there ain't no call f'r you to git mad.
It was my money. I earned it.

JIM.

(*Impatiently.*)

I ain't disputin' that. But what I want to know
is, what in thunder ye gone and done with it?

GRANDPA.

I invested it.

JIM.

(*Rises.*)

Invested it! When? What into?

GRANDPA.

Jest a year ago. It's in the automobilly manufac-
turing business and it's prubably goin' to earn me
more'n five hundred a year dividends.

JIM.

(*Angrily.*)

It was thet slick feller with the silk socks. (*Shouts
in a rage.*) Thet's who it was. He come here an'

done ye out o' your money. Thet's what he done. An' you went an' give him more'n a thousand dollars, jes' like a country jay. Thet's what ye done. I should a listened to Marthy. She said ye was gittin' childish and needed lookin' after. You ought to have a guardeen, that's what. The idea, throwing all that good money away to buy diamonds and silk socks with!

GRANDPA.

Now, Jimmie, it ain't lost. Them dividends is comin' soon. An' Mary an' me—

JIM.

(Interrupting angrily.)

“Mary an' you!” Mary an' you what?

GRANDPA.

It'll be enough f'r us to live on.

JIM.

Did ye reckon you an' the old woman was goin' to git married?

GRANDPA.

(Mildly.)

I reckon, James, that you ain't speakin' right to your father. (Rises and crosses right.) Thet ain't no tone to use. And, James, I don't reckon we're goin' to marry, 'cause, James, we was jist married.

JIM.

(His temper quite lost.)

Married! And who do you reckon is goin' to support you an' her? Ain't I got enough on my own hands to look after, my own family an' you, without havin' another crowded in? Ain't I?

AUNTIE and LISSIE enter through the back door.

GRANDPA.

(*Unruffled.*)

I guess ye hev, James. But Mary an' me ain't goin' to be crowded in. (*Puts his arm around AUNTIE.*) We'll hev our own house an' our own money. We shan't be beholden to nobody. Our dividends will be here today.

(*Music stops.*)

MARTHY comes in from down left. She carries a lamp, which she places on the table. SALLY enters through the back door.

SALLY.

(*Coming in and seeing AUNTIE.*)

Ma, where hev you be'n?

AUNTIE.

(*Joyfully.*)

Sally, I've jest be'n married!

SALLY.

(*Screams.*)

Married! Lakes of fire and heavenly flowers, what do you mean?

JIM.

(*With disgust.*)

Jes' what she says. They're married.

MARTHY.

Lord A'mighty! GRANDPA.

(*To AUNTIE.*)

Seems as if old folks ain't got no right to be.

SALLY.

Well, Ma Purvis, you march yourself right along home, f'r I regard this marriage as null and void, without bindin' force or effect.

MARTHY.

This family will never consent to keep you together
nor do nothin' toward your support.

JIM.

Father will live with us and your mother will live
with you, same as usual, and we won't hev no non-
sense.

SALLY.

You go home, Ma, this minute. Go on. (*Stamps
her foot.*)

GRANDPA.

(*Seeing AUNTIE's bewilderment.*)

Don't you worry, Mary, not a mite. Them divi-
dends will come.

AUNTIE.

(*Bravely.*)

I ain't a-worryin', Ben. I ain't a-worryin'. (*Goes
out back door.*)

MARTHY.

Grandpa, go up to your room. Go on!

(GRANDPA, *meekly and without replying, exits
upstairs.*)

SALLY.

(*Dismally.*)

I knowed it. I jes' knowed it. I was too durned
happy! Somethin' jes' had to happen.

(*Music, "Old Fashioned Rose."*)

(LISSIE *starts to go out, down left.*)

MARTHY.

Lissie, where be you goin'? You stay here.

LISSIE.

(*Turning back.*)

Yessum.

MARTHY.

Come here. Did you know about Grandpa and Auntie Purvis gittin' married?

LISSIE.

(Approaching her.)

Yessum.

MARTHY.

I knowed it, you shameless, deceitful, two-faced little huzzy! After all I've done f'r ye, you little snake-in-the-grass!

JIM.

Why didn't ye tell us what they was a-goin' to do?

(Roars.) Answer me!

LISSIE.

(Quietly.)

I didn't want to tell you. I wanted Grandpa and Auntie Purvis to be happy.

JIM.

(Shouts.)

Ain't they be'n happy?

LISSIE.

No, sir, they ain't.

SALLY.

F'r the love of cider!

JIM.

Why ain't they be'n happy?

LISSIE.

(Beginning to sob.)

'Cause Grandpa loves Auntie and Auntie loves Grandpa, and they want to be together.

SALLY.

I know how thet is!

LEM enters through the back door.

MARTHY.

(*To LISSIE, scornfully.*)

I reckon you'll say you ain't happy, next.

LISSIE.

(*Very softly.*)

No, ma'am, I ain't.

MARTHY.

And what do you want to be happy? Ain't ye had a good home? Plenty to eat, and a good bed to sleep in? What more do you want?

LISSIE.

(*Her voice stronger, but not defiant.*)

I want some one to love me. I want a home—a real home. I want a mother. I don't want to be drove like a slave. I want someone to love me because I belong to them—someone that will be sorry for me when I'm tired and sick.

SALLY.

Well, her wants would fill a book!

MARTHY.

(*With steadily rising voice and temper.*)

Well, I guess you've wanted about everything there is to want. Maybe ye want to git married, too. Maybe there's a sharper a-hangin' 'round thet will promise to marry ye and take ye to the city where ye kin wear silk stockings—an' di'monds, an' give ye a nigger to wait on ye. Maybe ye knew all about that sharper takin' all of Grandpa's money thet he had into the bank, an' maybe ye git letters from the robber, and maybe ye kissed him goodbye when he left last August!

GRANDPA enters at top of steps, and descends slowly, while listening and observing intently.

SALLY.

Great Stars and Stripes!

MARTHY.

(*In a fury, to LISSIE.*)

Now, you pack up y'r duds and leave this house!

JIM.

Marthy!

MARTHY.

(*In a complete tantrum.*)

You shet y'r head! I've listened to you long enough. I know my dooty, and I got the courage o' my convictions. Lissie's at the root of all this, an' I ain't a-goin' to hev her in my house!

(*LISSIE climbs the steps slowly and forlornly, and goes out through the door at the top. JIM shakes his head and exits down left.*)

SALLY.

Come on, Lem. Great guns, no wonder mother's plumb looney! (*Goes out with LEM, through the back door.*)

GRANDPA.

(*Pleadingly.*)

Marthy, ye ain't a-goin' to turn thet little gal out, be ye? She's a good gal, Marthy, an' ye don't know what ye may drive her to.

MARTHY.

Yes, I be goin' to turn her out—an' what of it? I ain't a-goin' to wait until we're all disgraced. I've allus held my head high in this community, and I ain't a-goin' to let no poorhouse brat trail it in the dust! W o u l d a self-respectin' gal kiss a stranger? Would she let him write to her? (*With emphasis.*) Would a strange feller have d a s t to kiss m e when I was a gal? Answer me that. (*Triumphantly.*)

GRANDPA.

(*With a wry smile.*)

No, Marthy. But Lissie never had a mother, perhaps.

MARTHY.

(*Indignantly.*)

Ain't I be'n a mother to her sence she was eight years old? Ain't I brought her up to know right from wrong? There ain't no satisfaction raisin' other folks's young-uns. Ye never know what'll crop out in 'em.

GRANDPA.

But Marthy, if—

MARTHY.

(*Interrupting him.*)

There ain't no use to argify, Grandpa Simpson. And don't you dast to talk to me, arter what you've done. Thet gal can't stay in my house another night! (*Flounces out, down left.*)

LISSIE enters at top of steps, wearing her hat and carrying a little bundle.

LISSIE.

(*Coming down.*)

Good-bye, Grandpa.

GRANDPA.

(*Turns toward her, as though startled by her presence.*)

Where ye goin', honey?

LISSIE.

I'm goin' to him, Grandpa.

GRANDPA.

Mr. Granger? How kin ye, dearie?

LISSIE.

He's down at the hotel, Grandpa.

GRANDPA.

(*Surprised.*)

He's in town?

LISSIE.

Yes.

GRANDPA.

(*Eagerly.*)

Then wait, honey. I'll go an' get him. You go an' hide somewhere—in the barn or somewhere, dearie—an' we'll see what we kin do. But don't you go to him, honey. It wouldn't be right. I believe he's honest, but there ain't no tellin'.

MARTHY.

(*Calls from off left.*)

Grandpa! Grandpa!

GRANDPA.

(*To LISSIE.*)

Wait, dearie, wait. (*Exits down left.*)

PHIL knocks at the outside door. LISSIE starts to open it. But before she has reached it, the door opens and PHIL stands on the threshhold.

PHIL.

(*Cordially.*)

Hello. (*Holds out his hand.*) Well, aren't you going to shake hands?

LISSIE.

(*Torn by her doubts.*)

Oh, Mr. Granger, are you good and honest? They call you a sharper. They say you robbed the bank, an' you do—oh, you do—wear silk socks!

(*Music stops.*)

PHIL.

(Laughs.)

That's a fact, I do wear silk socks. But you can't hang a man for that. So they say I'm bad, do they?

LISSIE.

Are you bad?

PHIL.

Well, Lissie, I'm not what you would call good. I wish I were. Did you get my letter?

LISSIE.

Yes.

PHIL.

And where's Grandpa?

LEM appears suddenly at the back window and pokes a shotgun through, pointing it at PHIL.

LEM.

(Trying to seem fierce.)

Throw up y'r hands!

(LISSIE backs against rear wall at center, and remains an awe-stricken spectator until her next speech.)

(Music tremolo.)

PHIL.

(Quickly throws up his hands, but shows no fear.)
Well? What's the idea?

SALLY appears at the window with LEM.

LEM.

Here (at window, speaks to SALLY), hold this till I git inside. (SALLY takes the gun. LEM enters.) I got ye, ain't I, Mr. Fancy Feller? (Takes gun from SALLY.)

PHIL.

(*Pleasantly.*)

Well, I guess you have. But what's the trouble? What's the frame-up? I don't get you.

SALLY comes in through the open door.

SALLY.

Ye may fool most people, but ye can't fool us, young feller. I knowed ye f'r what ye are, the minute I seen them socks.

LEM.

(*To Sally.*)

Come here. Hold this gun on him while I go fetch the marshal. (SALLY takes gun.) I suspicion you of bein' the bank robber that robbed the bank in this town last August. (*To Sally.*) If he attempts to leave here, shoot!

(*Music stops.*)

SALLY.

(*Eagerly.*)

You kin bet I will.

(LEM backs cautiously toward the door, eying PHIL all the while as if fearing a sudden attack. Exit through back door.)

PHIL.

(*Smiling.*)

Well, say, Miss—Miss—I beg your pardon. I didn't catch your name.

SALLY.

Sally Hecker.

PHIL.

(*Smiling very politely.*)

Will you permit me to lower my arms, Miss Hecker?

SALLY.

Mrs. Hecker; Mrs. Sally Hecker!

PHIL.

Oh; I beg our pardon. (*Lowers his arms*).
You're not married?

SALLY.

(*Tartly*.)

I reckon I be.

PHIL.

Why, I thought your brother said—

SALLY.

(*Interrupting*.)

He's not my brother.

PHIL.

How stupid. I mean your husband.

SALLY.

I'm a widder. He's my son.

PHIL.

Your son! (*In astonishment*.) Oh, come now;
you're joking.

SALLY.

(*Weakening*.)

Why do you think I'm joking?

PHIL.

Really, you surprise me. Of course, people marry
young, but—your son! You're trying to josh me.

SALLY.

Well, I'm not. How old do you think I be?

PHIL.

Well, I suppose, seeing you have a son, you must
be— But really, I'd never take you for a day over
twenty.

SALLY.

(*Giggling.*)

I was very young when I married Hecker.

PHIL.

Indeed, you must have been. Oh, please sit down, Mrs. Hecker. (*Politely waves her to a chair at left.*) The marshal will be some time getting here. If you will allow me, I'll sit down.

SALLY.

Sure. Go on; set. (*Sits at left.*)

PHIL.

(*Sitting at right.*)

Thank you. (*Pause.*) It's been a lovely day.

SALLY.

(*Sociably.*)

Yes, it has so. Ain't the flowers jest too sweet.

PHIL.

Yes, they're lovely. (*Pause.*) I used to know a girl named Sally. Strange, but that name recalls the sweetest memory of my life.

SALLY.

(*Sentimentally.*)

I want to know! PHIL.

Strange I should be talking to you like this, but you have a way of drawing a fellow out. Yes, Sally was my first sweetheart. (*Sighs.*) Pretty little Sally. Do you know, you look like her. Yes sir, same eyes; those big blue eyes; same sweet mouth. No wonder I felt when I first saw you that I'd known you forever. Yes, Sally threw me over. I've never married. (*Pause.*) Did you say you were a widow, Mrs. Hecker?

SALLY.

(*Simpering.*)

Yes, I am.

LISSIE.

(*Eagerly.*)

But she's goin' to be married to Orrin Ruddy.

SALLY.

(*Turning her head angrily.*)

Shet y'r head, Lissie Brown! (To PHIL, *sweetly.*)
Don't ye believe her. Can't a girl flirt a little, Mr.
Granger?

PHIL.

I wish you'd call me Phil.

SALLY.

(*Giggling.*)

It don't seem jes' right.

PHIL.

(*Tenderly.*)

Say it.

SALLY.

(*Coyly.*)

I won't.

PHIL.

"Phil."

SALLY.

(*More coyly than ever.*)

"Phil."

MARTHY.

(*Calls from off left.*)

Thet you, Sally? Come here a minute, will ye?

PHIL.

(*Rises quickly, crosses to SALLY and takes the gun,
very politely.*)

Allow me, Sally.

MARTHY enters down left.

MARTHY.

(Dumbfounded.)

“Sally!”

PHIL.

(Crosses to door with gun.)

I'll see you again, Sally. Ladies (raises hat politely), good day! (Exit through back door.)

(Long pause for the laugh. Hold this picture.)

MARTHY.

What's that sharper doin' here?

SALLY.

(Smiles tenderly.)

He's the bank robber.

(Music lively.)

MARTHY.

(Startled.)

The bank robber!

SALLY.

But I don't care. He's the sweetest, politest, bank robber I ever met. (Crosses right.)

MARTHY.

Sally Hecker, hev ye lost y'r senses?

JIM enters down left.

JIM.

(As he comes in.)

What's the trouble?

MARTHY.

(Excited.)

That sharper—that bank robber—has been here and Sally Hecker let him walk plumb away. And he's took our gun.

SALLY.

(*Placidly.*)

'Tain't so. It's Lem's gun.

JIM.

What's he doin' here?

MARTHY.

Come to see Lissie, I'll vow. (*To LISSIE.*) Did you write him to come here?

LISSIE.

No, ma'am. I hate him. He come to see Mrs. Sally Hecker. He likes her better'n me.

SALLY.

(*Tartly.*)

Land! Don't get so jealous.

MARTHY.

Whatever do you mean, Lissie Brown?

JEFF BIGGS, *greatly excited, enters quickly at back door.* LEM follows him in.

JEFF.

Where is he? (*During next few speeches he tries to look important, but can't get a word in.*)

LEM.

(*Looking around.*)

Where is he?

MARTHY.

He's gone.

LEM.

Gone! (*Pause.*) Which way did he go? How did he git away? SALLY.

Jes' took the gun and left.

LEM.

Come on, Marshal. There's a train out of here in

five minutes. We must get him afore that train pulls out. Come on, Marshal. He mustn't get that train!

(LEM and JEFF *rush out back door in frantic haste.*)

SALLY.

Dear me, why is robbers so fascinating! (*Goes out back door.*)

(*Music stops.*)

GRANDPA *enters from down left and stands by the door.*

MARTHY.

(*To LISSIE.*)

Why ain't you packed y'r duds and went?

LISSIE.

I'm going now. (*Picks up her bundle and starts for the back door.*)

GRANDPA.

(*Pleadingly.*)

Marthy!

MARTHY.

(*Coldly.*)

Ye can't say nothin' that will change me, Grandpa. I've stood disgrace enough from listening to you and Jim. I'm a church-goin' woman, an' now I'm listening to my conscience. (*To LISSIE.*) You git out! (*Exits down left.*)

LISSIE.

(*Softly.*)

Good-bye, Grandpa.

GRANDPA.

(*Gently.*)

Where be ye goin', honey?

LISSIE.

I don't know, Grandpa.

GRANDPA.

Lissie, after they're in bed I'll let ye in. Ye kin sleep there on the lounge. I'm always up fust in the morning, an' you kin go early an' they'll never know it. Then maybe something will happen to help us tomorrow. God won't fergit us, honey.

MARTHY *enters down left, carrying a lighted candle.*

MARTHY.

Well, air ye goin'? LISSIE.

Yessum. (*Goes out back door.*)

MARTHY.

Don't fergit to lock the door, Grandpa, and wind the clock. Air ye goin' to set up late?

GRANDPA.

(*Locking the window.*)

Not to-night, Marthy.

MARTHY.

Bring some matches, Jim. (*Exits upstairs.*)

JIM *enters down left.*

I got some. Good night, Father.

GRANDPA.

Good night, Jimmie. Them dividends will be here tomorrow.

(*Music, "Old Fashioned Rose."*)

JIM.

(*Disgusted.*)

Ah! (*Exit upstairs.*)

GRANDPA.

(*Winds the clock, looks around cautiously, crosses softly and opens the outside door.*)

Come in, honey ; come in. (*LISSIE steps in from out of doors. He takes her bundle from her, and as he speaks to her he removes her hat.*) Now go to sleep. Say y'r prayers, then lay down an' go to sleep. The Lord will take care of ye, dearie.

(*LISSIE sinks to her knees beside the lounge. GRANDPA noiselessly closes and locks the door, lights his candle and extinguishes the lamp on the table. The only light is the feeble gleam of the candle on the table, and the flood of moonlight coming through the window, in which LISSIE is kneeling. GRANDPA crosses to the window and pulls down the shade. Then he takes his candle and mounts the stairs at the left.*)

GRANDPA.

(*At top of stairs, turns and whispers.*)
Good night, dearie.

LISSIE.

(*In a whisper.*)
Good night, Grandpa.

(*GRANDPA goes out through the door at top of steps and closes it. The stage is left in darkness.*)

CURTAIN.

THE CITY FELLER

THE THIRD ACT.

SCENE: *Same as the Second Act. LISSIE is asleep on the couch.*

LIGHTS: *All stage lights off at rise. Dim rose bunch, for dawn effect, back of window and rear door. After GRANDPA raises the shade, this gradually grows brighter and blends to yellow, reaching full sunlight when stage lights are on full. Foots and borders on dim when GRANDPA enters with candle, increasing to half up when he raises the shade, and gradually going up full as daylight is supposed to come on.*

MUSIC: *At rise, "Old Fashioned Rose."*

AT RISE: *An alarm clock on the mantel shelf is ringing. After a moment, GRANDPA enters up left and comes down the steps. He carries a lighted candle. He is in his shirt sleeves, and as he enters he is hitching his suspenders over his shoulders with his free hand. He puts the candle down, raises the window shade, blows the candle out, turns off the alarm, crosses to LISSIE, and gently shakes her.*

GRANDPA.

(Softly.)

Lissie! Lissie! It's four o'clock, honey.

LISSIE.

(Sits up with a start, and rubs her eyes.)
Grandpa!

GRANDPA.

Yes, honey. You must get up now, dear. It's four o'clock, and Marthy and Jim will be down directly.

LISSIE.

Yes, Grandpa. Oh, Grandpa, I had such a beautiful dream! I dreamed you an' me an' Auntie Purvis was going up in a great big balloon, an' we was pickin' stars out of the sky an' putting them in a basket, an' then they turned out to be diamonds, an' Marthy and Jim was a standin' way down below on the ground an' cryin' fit to kill, an' Phil——

(*Music stops.*)

MARTHY.

(*Off stage, up stairs.*)

Jim, it's four o'clock; hurry up, now.

(*LISSIE snatches bonnet in a hurry, GRANDPA helps her, puts bonnet on crooked, etc.*)

GRANDPA.

Hurry, honey, hurry.

MARTHY enters at top of stairs, carrying a lighted candle.

MARTHY.

(*Sees LISSIE and GRANDPA.*)

Well! (*Blows candle out.*) I suspicioned this. Ye fooled us fine, didn't ye? (*Calls.*) Jim, hurry up down here! (*She comes down stairs.*)

(*LEM knocks at outside door. MARTHY crosses to door, unlocks and opens it.*)

LEM enters.

LEM.

(*Excitedly.*)

What d'ye think? That city feller's gone.

MARTHY.

Gone!

LEM.

Yep; jumped his bond. He paid the justice two hundred dollars right outen his pocket last night. Then at ten o'clock, when everybody had went to bed in the hotel, durned if he didn't sneak out.

JIM enters at top of steps. *He is in his shirtsleeves, and is putting his suspenders over his shoulders. He stands and listens.*

LEM.

There was a telegram come for him at ten o'clock, and when Bill brung it up and woke everybody up in the hotel, they went to his room, but the bed hadn't even be'n slept in. That's the kind of a slicker he is! When Hiram brung the milk to the hotel this mornin', Mrs. Redburn Jenkins, the cook, told him all about it, and when he brung our milk jes' now he hollered to me. You bet y'r life they'll put a de-tekative on his trail. They'll get him. Fine kind of a fellow, eh, Lissie? I telled ye he was no good.

GRANDPA.

(*In a daze.*)

Gone! It can't be!

JIM.

(*Comes down stairs.*)

Course he's gone. He's got all he can from the rubes in this town, and we'll never hear of him again.

SALLY rushes in through back door. *She wears a kimona, and her hair is in curl papers.*

SALLY.

Well, what do you think of it? Ain't it fierce? An' me almost took in by him, too! Lucky I didn't have no money with me, f'r I swear to goodness if he'd asked f'r it an' batted them eyes at me I'd a given the hull caboodle. Why, that feller jes' mesmerizes ye, so help me gravy! Ain't it so? (*Undoes hair, etc.*)

MARTHY.

(*Sternly.*)

Well, he couldn't mesmerize me.

SALLY.

Nothin' could mesmerize you.

MARTHY.

Lissie, you git out now! Hurry up. Hunt some other place f'r to git y'r breakfast.

(*LISSIE takes her package and goes out. LEM watches her go, and follows her.*)

SALLY.

Great white eats! ain't ye goin' to give her no breakfast?

MARTHY.

No, I ain't. (*Exits down left.*)

JIM.

Better give her a cup of coffee, Marthy. (*Exits left.*)

(*GRANDPA sinks on the lounge, his head in his hands.*)

SALLY.

Well, one can suffer more on an empty stomach, I reckon. That feller jes' mesmerized Lissie, same as he done me. It's a blessin' we ain't all be'n murdered. Say, I seen a murder once. Yep, I was standin' at the window (*sits beside GRANDPA*), wipin'

the berry bowl countin' how many times I'd used it, when I heard a shot. It's a wonder I didn't drop the berry bowl, but I didn't. I jumped, but very little. I ain't a nervous woman, but a sudden shot when you're engaged in peaceful pursuits is enough to scare anyone. But I haven't be'n a married woman an' had all sorts of trouble f'r nothin'. Bein' married prepares a woman for almost anything. Well, I looked out of the window, takin' care to put the berry bowl on the table first, but I still had the tea towel in my hand. Course I didn't know it, f'r what use would I have f'r a tea towel? But then I once knew a woman who was cleanin' her bird cage when a fire engine went by, an' she was so excited, durned if she didn't run all the way to the fire with the bird cage in her hand. Not that I ever git excited, like that, but as I was sayin', I heard a shot an' looked out of the window—

LEM *enters from outside.*

LEM.

(*Interrupting.*)

Say, maw!

SALLY.

Well, what?

LEM.

Me an' Lissie's goin' to be married.

SALLY.

(*Screams.*)

What! See here, young feller, don't stand there an' tell me no such flabgasted nonsense.

LEM.

(*Stubbornly.*)

I mean it. I'm goin' to marry Lissie.

LISSIE *comes in from outside.*

SALLY.

Well, f'r the love of sausage! Lem, y'r brains must be plumb dislocated. You marry that pauper, when you kin jes' snap y'r fingers an' any girl in the village would jes' hop at ye?

LEM.

I know that. But I want Lissie, an' I'm goin' to have her. You know when I make up my mind, you can't change me.

SALLY.

Yes, y're jes' like y'r father. If ever there was an all-fired mule, he was it.

MARTHY *enters from down left.*

SALLY.

Now what do you believe! You turned her out, but it looks like I gotta take her in. Lem's goin' to marry Lissie.

MARTHY.

Marry Lissie!

SALLY.

Yep. Mother an' Lem a-marryin', if I don't get a durn sudden move on me, I'll git left. Lem, come on home and let's talk this here over. Better think it over, Lem. Marryin' is a durn serious business.

LEM.

All the talkin' ain't a-goin' to change me. I'm goin' to marry Lissie.

SALLY.

Well, ye kin talk it over can't ye, ye durn mule? *(Strikes at him and he dodges.)* Come on. *(She goes out the back door, dragging LEM with her.)*

MARTHY.

Well, of all things. Y're a lucky girl, Lissie, an'

if I was you I'd grab him so quick he'd never git a chance to think it over. (*Exits down left.*)

LISSIE.

(*Mournfully.*)

Oh, Grandpa! (*Runs to his outstretched arms.*)

GRANDPA.

(*Holding her to him.*)

There, there, honey. Maybe it's the Lord's doin's. Maybe it's the best f'r ye. Ye'll have a good home. An' maybe Phil was a sharper arter all. Maybe it's the Lord's way of punishin' us f'r bein' so unsatisfied.

LISSIE.

Oh, Grandpa, to think Mr. Phil would be so cruel as to take your money and Auntie Purvis's money! Her money that she saved to be buried by. Do you think he has gone forever, Grandpa?

GRANDPA.

I'm afeared, Lissie, I'm afeared. (*Releases her, and she steps away a bit.*)

LISSIE.

And his eyes was blue!

(*Music, "Old Time Wedding Day."*)

GRANDPA.

Yes, yes; they was.

AUNTIE PURVIS *enters cheerfully from outside.*

AUNTIE PURVIS.

Well, well, Lissie. Good mornin', Ben. What ye lookin' so pinin' f'r? Land, the sun's still shinin', and the birds a-singin'. Do ye think the good Lord has f'rgotten us, jes' because we trusted an honest-lookin' feller an' he didn't live up to that trust? Tush!

(*Puts an arm around LISSIE.*). An' how do we know he ain't honest? Like as not he'll be back again. I ain't a-goin' to lose faith so soon. So y're a-goin' to git married, eh, Lissie; an' to Lemuel!

LISSIE.

(*In her arms.*)

Oh, Grandma, I don't want to.

AUNTIE.

Tut, tut. Ye ain't signed an' sealed yit. Dry y'r eyes an' come on home with me an' have a mite of breakfast. They ain't nothin' so bad, but it might be a heap wuss. Come along, Lissie. Ben, go eat y'r breakfast, then smoke y'r pipe, an' after that you'll feel more like rememberin' that the Lord said, "Ask, an' ye shall receive." An' if He sees that we're a-fitten f'r it, we're a-goin' to git them dividends.

GRANDPA.

(*With new courage.*)

Mary, ye make me ashamed. But I'm goin' to perk up. (*Stands up resolutely.*)

AUNTIE.

That's right, Ben; that's right. (*Pats him on the back.*) Come along, Lissie.

GRANDPA.

(*Looks all around.*)

Mary!

AUNTIE.

Yes? (*He holds out his arms bashfully and looks inquiringly at her. She smiles and goes to him.*) Well, there! (*Kisses GRANDPA.*)

(*Music stops.*)

SALLY enters through back door in time to see them kiss.

SALLY.

Great guns! Well, Maw Purvis! No wonder I'm so romantic. Say, f'r the love of y'r country, Maw, come home and eat breakfast. If I have any more excitement on an empty stomach I'm goin' to cannip. And Orrin is comin' today, too. Come on, Lissie. I 'spect I gotta give you my blessin' and a breakfast. Come on. Grandpa, you're a devil. (SALLY, AUNTIE and LISSIE *exeunt through back door.*)

(Note: SALLY now changes dress for next entrance.)

GRANDPA.

(To himself, emphatically.)

Them dividends has got to come. The young feller promised. They've g o t to come.

JIM enters from down left, lighting his pipe.

JIM.

Well, are ye satisfied now, eh? (Crosses to right.)

GRANDPA.

(Comes to center.)

Jimmie, I've be'n tricked, I reckon. I don't care so much f'r myself. But Mary's little fund—the dollars she'd saved f'r her funeral—and our dream of independence, Jimmie—the little home, the peaceful days f'r me an' my old wife! (Sinks into chair at left.)

JIM.

(Crosses up center.)

Well, it's a lesson to you. But it's come too late, I reckon. But there's no use whinin' over it, father. You'll have to make the best of it. An' I might of had that Hillgar eighty, but it's all gone to buy silk socks f'r a sharper. Better go in to y'r breakfast. (Exits upstairs.)

LISSIE enters through back door, runs to GRANDPA and falls to her knees in front of him.

LISSIE.

Oh, Grandpa, Grandpa! I can't do it! I can't marry Lem! I don't like him! Oh what shall I do? What shall I do? (*Sobs.*)

GRANDPA.

(*Soothingly.*)

Honey, honey; don't take on so. Lord, Lord! I wish I could help you. I wish that city feller hadn't never come to this town.

LISSIE.

(*Desperately.*)

Grandpa, if I had some money I'd run away. Oh, I don't know what to do! Lem says I must marry him today.

GRANDPA.

(*In surprise.*)

Today! Well, honey, you must make the best of it, I reckon. It's hard f'r a girl to marry without love, but you must make the best of it.

LEM enters through the back door.

LEM.

Here ye are, an' a-cryin'. You'd think ye was goin' to a funeral, 'stead of a weddin'. Oh, say now, Lissie, I ain't a-goin' to be so bad; honest I ain't. What do you say, Grandpa? Ain't she lucky to git me? Why, all the gals in this town will be jealous of you, Lissie. Oh, come on now. (*Starts to raise her up.*) Give us a kiss.

LISSIE.

(*Clinging frantically to GRANDPA.*)

Don't let him, Grandpa! Don't let him!

LEM.

(Angrily.)

Say! If ye don't watch out I won't marry ye, an' ye'll be sorry when it's too late.

GRANDPA.

Now, Lemuel, don't be hasty. The gal is nervous an' needs a little understandin'; that's all.

MARTHY enters down left.

LEM.

Well, I ain't a-goin' to wait no longer. If she's a-goin' to marry me, she's got to git ready.

MARTHY.

Goin' to marry her today, Lem?

LEM.

Yes, today. Ain't no use waitin'. Mother's goin' to the Parson's with us, an' her an' Orrin Ruddy's goin' to git spliced at the same time.

MARTHY.

F'r the land sake! Go on upstairs and dress f'r y'r weddin', Lissie. Don't make a fool of yourself. You can put on that dress I made ye f'r y'r last birthday, an' there's some new ribbons in the bureau drawer. Go on, now, and git ready.

GRANDPA.

Go along, Lissie. It's f'r the best; I can't see no other way. (Leads LISSIE up stage; then sits on lounge.)

LEM.

I'll be back an' all ready in half an hour. (Swaggers out the back door.)

(LISSIE slowly mounts the steps and goes out.)

MARTHY.

(*Going.*)

Well, she's a lucky girl, I say! (*Exits down left.*)

(GRANDPA *leans his head on his hands.*)

MARTHY.

(*After a moment, calls from off left.*)

Grandpa, air ye goin' to eat y'r breakfast?

GRANDPA.

(*Wearily.*)

Yes, yes. (*Exits down left.*)

POSTMASTER ORRIN RUDDY *knocks loudly on the back door, and repeats the knock.* MARTHY *enters from down left, crosses and opens the door, and greets ORRIN, who is dressed for his wedding.*

MARTHY.

Why, how do you do, Mr. Ruddy!

ORRIN.

Yep. Mr. Orrin Ruddy, at y'r service, ma'am. Guess you know what's happening today.

MARTHY.

Land, yes! Y're goin' to marry Sally Hecker.

ORRIN.

(*Putting his hand to his ear.*)

Eh? What's thet?

MARTHY.

(*Shouts.*)

Marry! Marry Sally Hecker.

ORRIN.

Yep. I didn't have a chance to git away. I ain't as spry as I once was. Sally's the best cook in this state.

MARTHY.

Well, postmaster, I wish ye great joy.

ORRIN.

Yep, she makes great pie! (*Looks around.*) Where's Ben? I want to see him private.

MARTHY.

(*Calls.*)

Grandpa! Mr. Ruddy, the postmaster, wants to see ye. (*Turns to ORRIN.*) Sit down, Mr. Ruddy. (*Goes out down left, to call GRANDPA.*)

(ORRIN looks all around for a cuspidor, and finally spits out of the window.)

GRANDPA enters from down left.

GRANDPA.

(*Cordially.*)

Howdy, postmaster.

ORRIN.

How do do, Ben. (*Takes out big envelope.*) Special delivery. Sh'd of brought it last night, but I had to fiddle f'r the firemen's dance. (*Looks around, then spits out of window.*) Couldn't git here no sooner.

GRANDPA.

(*Tremblingly opens letter, and a check drops out.*)

The dividends! the dividends!

ORRIN.

Eh?

GRANDPA.

(*Excitedly.*)

The dividends! (*Picks up the check.*) Mary! Mary! (*Dashes out the back door.*)

ORRIN.

Eh? Hope no one ain't dead. (*Sits in chair at right.*)

SALLY enters through the back door, dressed for the wedding.

SALLY.

(*Seeing ORRIN.*)

Oh, here you are, dear man! Goodness, I'm so excited my breath just comes in short pants.

ORRIN.

(*Without rising.*)

What's that? What's that? My last chance? There, there; keep cool. I ain't a-goin' to run away.

SALLY.

Git out. How do you like my dress?

ORRIN.

Fust class. Come and set. (*Indicates his knee.*)

SALLY.

(*Bashfully looking all around.*)

Oh, Orrin! I don't dast!

ORRIN.

Oh, come on.

SALLY.

(*Hesitating.*)

Well—there! (*Sits on his knee, facing toward left.*)

ORRIN.

By jenks, this makes me think of my boyhood's happy hours.

SALLY.

Land of buttons, Orrin, but you are romantic!

ORRIN.

(*Jumps up, and SALLY nearly falls.*)

Rheumatic? Never had rheumatics in my life!

SALLY.

Why, Orrin Ruddy! I said romantic.

ORRIN.

Oh; that's different. (*Sits again.*) Set! (*Indicates his knee, and SALLY sits on it, as before.*)

JIM enters at top of stairs, sees them and goes back quietly.

SALLY.

(*Seeing JIM, has jumped up, her hand on her heart.*)

Great suspenders! My reputation is gone in this village.

MARTHY enters from down left.

MARTHY.

All ready f'r the weddin', Sally?

SALLY.

(*Crosses a little up center.*)

Well, I couldn't be no readier.

JIM enters at top of steps, descends and crosses to ORRIN, who meets him at center.

JIM.

(*Shaking hands.*)

How are ye, postmaster.

ORRIN.

(*Rising deliberately.*)

Hooked, James; hooked.

(JIM laughs and moves to left of stage.)

LEM enters excitedly from outside.

LEM.

What do you think? He's back!

(*Music, "Old Fashioned Rose" till curtain.*)

ALL.

Who's back? LEM.

That city feller! Jes' got in on the ten-fifteen. Brought two men from the city with recommends. They say he's all right; that he ain't no sharper. Where's Lissie? The minister's waitin'. (*Calls excitedly.*) Lissie! Lissie!

JIM.

Hold on; there ain't no rush. (*Crosses up right and intercepts LEM.*) LEM.

I won't hold on. I ain't goin' to wait. Lissie's got to marry me now.

JIM.

(*Emphatically.*)

I say you'll wait. LEM.

Why? Why? (*Excited.*) Because that city feller's come back. That's why.

JIM.

I'm goin' to give the gal a show.

SALLY.

Don't let him interfere with y'r weddin', Lem.

LEM.

(*Swaggering.*)

I ain't a-goin' to. I ain't afraid of no bluffs. Lissie said she'd marry me, and the minister's a-waitin'.

JIM.

Let him wait. MARTHY.

Jim, don't you interfere.

LISSIE, dressed for her wedding, enters slowly through the door at the top of the steps, and looks down from the platform.

POSITIONS.

LEM.

LISSIE.

(on platform)

SALLY.

JIM.

ORRIN.

MARTHY.

JIM.

(Starts for the stairs.)

Lissie!

MARTHY.

(Stopping him.)

Shut y'r mouth!

GRANDPA enters from outside.

GRANDPA.

(Joyfully.)

Lissie, Lissie; they've come. (Holding up the papers.) The dividends!

LISSIE.

(Eagerly.)

Oh, Grandpa—is he here?

GRANDPA.

(Going slightly right.)

No, honey, but he sent the dividends.

LEM.

(Impatiently.)

Come on, Lissie; the parson's waitin'.

(LISSIE comes slowly down the steps.)

AUNTY PURVIS enters from outside and crosses right, to GRANDPA. SALLY.

Yes; for goodness sake, come on. (Takes ORRIN's arm and they go up center.)

(As SALLY crosses up center, GRANDPA and AUNTIE move down right.)

LEM.

(At the door.)

Come on, Lissie.

(LISSIE crosses slowly to LEM., puts her hand in his, crosses to the door and opens it, while SALLY and ORRIN move to right of doorway.)

PHIL is standing in the doorway.

PHIL.

Ah! Good morning. (All show surprise. PHIL looks around.) I beg your pardon. Am I intruding?

GRANDPA.

(Eagerly.)

Mr. Phil, you're welcome! (Crosses to center.)

MARTHY.

(Starting for the door.)

Wait a minute! JIM.

(Stopping her.)

Hold on!

LEM.

Yes, you are intruding, Mr. City Feller. We're goin' to be married, Lissie and me! (Moves down left.)

PHIL.

(Astonished.)

Married! Lissie, is this true? (At center.)

LISSIE.

(Softly, and turning her face away.)

Yes. (Goes left of center.)

(SALLY crosses down right.)

PHIL.

I came back to ask you to be my wife. I—I thought you cared for me, and trusted me.

LEM.

Come on, Lissie. (Makes a start, putting his arm around LISSIE.)

PHIL.

(Sharply to LEM.)

Wait! (Turns to GRANDPA.) Grandpa, did you get your dividends?

GRANDPA.

(Crossing and taking his hand.)

Yes, my boy; yes.

(AUNTIE crosses to PHIL.)

PHIL.

(Heartily.)

Good! And Grandma (takes her hand and kisses it)—God bless her! Grandpa, you can now live in a spick-span cottage in the heart of the village, and own your own horses and rig—yes, and an automobile if you wish. For your stock in the automobile business is worth ten thousand dollars, and the dividends a thousand dollars a year.

POSITIONS.

PHIL. LISSIE.

AUNTIE. LEM.

GRANDPA. JIM.

SALLY. MARTHY.

SALLY.

Oh, my Lord! MARTHY.

I always said father was a smart business man.

JIM.

You bet! PHIL.

(Turning to LEM.)

Now, Mr. Lemuel Hecker, you owe me an apology for casting aspersions on my spotless reputation. Apologize!

LEM.

(Blustering.)

I ain't goin' to apologize to no man.

(SALLY anxiously crosses in front of GRANDPA and AUNTIE to right center.)

PHIL.

(Sharply.)

Hurry up.

LEM.

(Bluffing.)

You stand out of my way.

PHIL.

(Looking right at him.)

Apologize!

LEM.

(In a rage.)

Durn you! (Drives his fist at PHIL.)

(PHIL steps aside and gives him an upper cut. LEM falls flat at center.)

PHIL.

(Standing over him.)

Apologize!

LEM.

(Weakly.)

I apologize. (Rises and crosses to SALLY, who pets him.)

PHIL.

(Good-naturedly.)

Fine! (To LISSIE.) Lissie, I'm going away. Will you come with me? LISSIE.

Yes, sir. (She goes to him, and he folds her in his arms.)

SALLY.

(With her hands on her hips.)

And he wears silk socks!

CURTAIN.

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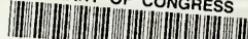
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